

Fact Sheet

California Department of Health Services | Cancer Detection Section

prostate cancer

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men. One in six men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer at some point in his lifetime.^{1,2}

- In California, approximately 20,500 men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2002, and over 3,000 men will die from the disease.²
- Prostate cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in men, exceeded only by lung cancer.²
- Prostate cancer, more than any other form of cancer, is a disease associated with aging. About 75% of men are age 65 and older when diagnosed.²
- African American men have the highest rates of prostate cancer. African American men are 60% more likely than White men to develop prostate cancer, twice as likely as Hispanic men, and three times more likely than Asian and Pacific Islander men.²
- Prostate cancer in African Americans is more likely to be an aggressive form of the cancer and strike at an earlier age.³
- Little is known about the causes of prostate cancer, though a diet high in fat increases the risk.⁴
- Like most cancers, prostate cancer is most likely to be treated more successfully when found in its early stages. Unlike breast cancer, clinical trials have not clearly demonstrated a decrease in mortality following screening and there are many uncertainties about early detection of this disease. For example, prostate cancer often grows very slowly (unlike other cancers) and may never become life threatening.²
- The American Cancer Society, American Urological Association and the National Comprehensive Cancer Network recommend doctors offer men age 50 and older the option of yearly screening tests for the disease using two tests, the Digital Rectal Exam (DRE) and the Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA), along with a discussion of the benefits and risks of both tests. Men at high risk, such as African Americans and men who have a first-degree relative (father, brother, or son) diagnosed with prostate cancer at an early age, should begin testing at age 45.⁵
- Early detection may have an effect on survival. At least 70% of all prostate cancers are detected early (while confined to the prostate), with a five-year survival rate of 97%. If the prostate cancer is detected after it has spread to other parts of the body, the survival rate is 34%.²

Sources:

1. American Cancer Society, What Are the Key Statistics About Prostate Cancer?, Cancer Reference Information Fact Sheet, www.cancer.org, Accessed: July 2002.
2. American Cancer Society, California Division and Public Health Institute, California Cancer Registry, California Cancer Facts & Figures 2002.
3. Mayo Clinic, What is Prostate Cancer? Fact Sheet, June 2002, www.mayoclinic.com, Accessed: July 2002.
4. Mills PK, (ed). Prostate Cancer in California: A Special Report. Berkeley, CA: Public Health Institute, June 2000.
5. American Cancer Society, Can Prostate Cancer Be Found Early?, Prevention & Early Detection Fact Sheet, www.cancer.org, Accessed: July 2002.